

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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TO AMEMBASSY ROME  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0642

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, IT  
SUBJ: ROVIGO PROVINCIAL ELECTION

### 1. SUMMARY:

THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION IN ROVIGO HAS YIELDED RESULTS THAT MUST NOT BE CONSIDERED COMPLETELY SATISFACTORY TO ANY OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED, LEAST OF ALL TO THE SOCIALISTS. THE DC FARED BETTER THAN MANY HAD EXPECTED, OBTAINING A PLURALITY OF THE 173,000 VOTES CAST WINNING THE SAME PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE AS IT WON IN THE 1975 PROVINCIAL ELECTION, BUT LOST WITH RESPECT TO THE DC PROVINCIAL S TALLY IN THE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTION. THE PCI POSTED GAINS AND IS NOW ONE PERCENTAGE POINT BEHIND THE DC, HOWEVER THE PARTY DID NOT ACHIEVE ITS PRIMARY GOAL OF SECURING AN ADDITIONAL SEAT IN THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL. THEIR PARTNER IN THE FORMER PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, THE PSI, SLIPPED BELOW ITS 75 AND 76 TOTALS, UNDOUBTEDLY LOSING VOTES TO THE COMMUNISTS. THE PSDI AND MSI KEPT THEIR SEATS IN THE COUNCIL BUT WERE UNIMPRESSIVE. THE OUTCOME OF THE CONTEST, WHICH BROUGHT VISITS FROM, AMONG OTHERS, ANDREOTTI (TO THE SIDE OF ROVIGO DEPUTY ANTONIO BISAGLIA, A RISING DC STAR), PCI DIRECTORATE MEMBER COSSUTTA, AND THE PSI S CRAXI, LEAVES THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL DIVIDED EXACTLY AS IT WAS WHEN THE

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FORMER GOVERNMENT WAS DISSOLVED BECAUSE THE PCI-PSI COALITION LACKED ENOUGH VOTES TO GOVERN THE PROVINCE. END OF SUMMARY.

2. DC PROVINCIAL SECRETARY ROMANI SAID HIS PARTY IS SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE ROVIGO PROVINCIAL ELECTION THAT ENDED YESTERDAY. DESPITE DROPPING 2.6 POINTS BELOW THE 41.1 PERCENT IT WON IN THE PROVINCE IN LAST JUNE S NATIONAL

ELECTIONS, THE DC HELD THE 38.5 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IT GAINED IN THE LAST PREVIOUS PROVINCIAL ELECTION IN 1973. THE PARTY WAS HELPED BY THE ALMOST CONSTANT PRESENCE AND LEADERSHIP OF ROVIGO DEPUTY ANTONIO BISAGLIA WHO IS CONSIDERED BY MANY A POSSIBLE FUTURE DC LEADER AND WHO IS EXTREMELY POPULAR IN THE PROVINCE. IN ADDITION ANDREOTTI PAID A VISIT TO ROVIGO SHORTLY BEFORE THE ELECTION, INDICATING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ELECTION TO THE DC. HOWEVER, THE PARTY WAS HURT BY A SCANDAL INVOLVING MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS THAT CAME TO LIGHT A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE VOTE INVOLVING SEVERAL LOCAL DC FUNCTIONARIES AND A REGIONAL ASSESSOR FROM VERONA. STILL, THE DC RETAINED 10 SEATS IN THE 24 SEAT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, THE SAME NUMBER IT WON IN 1973.

3. THE PCI CONTINUED ITS ADVANCE IN THE PROVINCE, WINNING 37.5 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, AN INCREASE OF 1.4 PERCENT WITH RESPECT TO THE PROVINCIAL TOTAL IN THE JUNE NATIONAL ELECTIONS AND 1.6 POINTS HIGHER THAN ITS TOTAL IN '73. PROVINCIAL PARTY SECRETARY VITTORIO SEGA CALLS THE RESULTS A GREAT SUCCESS FOR HIS PARTY AND TODAY S L UNITA TOUTS THE VOTE AS A BITTER DEFEAT FOR BISAGLIA, THE DOROTEI, AND THE DC. NEVERTHELESS, THE PCI DID NOT ACHIEVE ITS PRIMARY GOAL IN THE ELECTION, FAILING TO ADD TO THE 9 SEATS IT HELD ON THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BEFORE THE ELECTION.

4. THE PSI FARED NONE TOO WELL, BUT STILL MANAGED TO HANG ON TO ITS THREE COUNCIL SEATS. WITH 10.8 PERCENT OF THE VOTE THE PARTY DROPPED A HALF POINT BELOW ITS '76 SHOWING AND UNCLASSIFIED

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FELL ONE PERCENT BELOW ITS TOTAL IN THE '75 PROVINCIAL ELECTION,. MOST REPORTS FEEL FORMER PSI VOTERS CAST THEIR BALLOTS FOR THE PCI ALTHOUGH L UNITA STATES THAT THE EXTREME LEFT (DP) PARTY MAY HAVE PICKED UP SOME PSI DEFECTORS. DC PROVINCIAL SECRETARY ROMANI COMMENTED THAT THE PSI LOSSES TO THE PCI WERE DUE TO THE FORMER S POLICY OF CONFRONTATION. THE PSI SLIPPAGE CAME DESPITE A VISIT AND PLEA FOR SUPPORT FROM PARTY SECRETARY CRAXI.

5. THE PSDI AND MSI-DN EACH KEPT ITS SINGLE SEAT IN THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL. THE PSDI WITH 6.1 PERCENT LOST EIGHT-TENTHS OF A PERCENT WITH RESPECT TO THE '75 PROVINCIAL ELECTION BUT RECOVERED FROM ITS POOR SHOWING IN '76 WHEN IT RECEIVED ONLY 4.5 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. THE MSI-DN ON THE OTHER HAND CONTINUED ITS DOWNWARD CREEP, LOSING ONE-TENTH OF A PERCENT WITH RESPECT TO '76. SIX-TENTHS COMPARED WITH '75.

6. THE PLI AND PRI WON LITTLE SUPPORT, EACH GARNERING LESS

THAN TWO PERCENT OF THE VOTE. L UNITA DID NOT HESITATE TO  
NOTE THAT THE EXTREME LEFT DEMOCRATIC PROLETARIAT (DP)  
PARTY TOOK ONE PERCENT THE QTE PRECISE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
THE DC AND PCI UNQTE PERCENTAGES. NONE OF THE THREE GROUPS  
MUSTERED ENOUGH SUPPORT TO WIN A SEAT IN THE COUNCIL.

7. THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION CONFIRMS THE PCI S STRENGTH  
IN ROVIGO PROVINCE AT THE EXPENSE, PRIMARILY, OF THE SOCIALISTS.  
AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER THE DC SUCCEEDED IN HOLDING ITS OWN  
IN THE FACE OF STRONG PRESSURE (INCLUDING A SCANDAL INVOLVING  
LOCAL PARTY OFFICIALS) THANKS LARGELY TO THE EFFORTS OF AN  
EFFECTIVE POPULAR LEADER (BISAGLIA). THE FACT THAT THE MAKE-  
UP OF THE NEW COUNCIL (10 DC, 9 PCI, 3 PSI, 1 MSI-DN, AND  
1 PSDI) MAY LEAD AGAIN TO A PCI-PSI COALITION OF 12 WHICH  
HAS PROVEN ITSELF UNABLE TO ACT IN THE PROVINCE INDICATES  
THIS ELECTION MAY MERELY PAVE THE WAY FOR ANOTHER IN THE  
NEAR FUTURE. PATTERSON.

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## Message Attributes

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